

Action plan

- 1 Read the title. This will give you some idea of the topic of the text.
- 2 Read the text first, then read each question very carefully in turn. Underline key words in the question.
- 3 Remember questions follow the order of the text. Find the part of the text the question refers to. The questions will paraphrase what is in the text. Check the text carefully before answering.
- 4 Are you confident about the answer? If so, note it down and move on.
- 5 If the answer is not obvious, eliminate the options you are sure are wrong.
- 6 If you find one question difficult, move on to the next one.
- 7 When you have finished, go back to any questions that you left out and look at them again. They may seem easier now. If they don't, just choose one of the options you have not eliminated. Don't leave any questions blank.

You are going to read a newspaper article. For questions **13–19**, choose the answer (**A, B, C or D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

The Making of an Internet Sensation

We've all received those web links from friends 'you must watch this – it's brilliant!' Read how one such popular Internet video was made.

It is a cold November evening and I am perched at the top of a tall stepladder in a village hall. On the floor, 16 golden retrievers stare up at me curiously. They are arranged in a square, four by four. I watch through the viewfinder of my video camera. This, I think to myself, could make me famous.

I hadn't thought up the idea myself – it all came about at the behest of my editor. We want you to write about viral videos, he had told me a couple of weeks earlier. Go and find out why some videos go viral. What makes people
10 share them? It sounded straightforward enough. He sent me a link to *Charlie Bit My Finger*, a video of a baby biting his little brother. It is currently YouTube's most watched video of all time. "I want you to make your own viral and become internet famous," he said. "If this can get 135 million hits, you can do it too."

To better understand what makes people share videos, I turned to Judith Donath of MIT, who studies online social networks. She argues that the factors driving people to share stuff over the web are not that different from the reasons apes pick bugs out of each other's fur: it's a way of establishing social bonds. Other researchers have argued that in human societies, language – especially gossip – has taken on the social function of such grooming. Sharing videos via email
20 or within social networks is just the next step, Donath argues. "Sharing online is equivalent to small talk," she says. "It's a little gift of information. It shows 'I'm thinking of you.'"

Video sharing is also a way of making a statement. "In addition, people use videos as a way of showing their position in the 'information-technology ecology,'" Donath says. "A video reflects on the person who sends it." In other words, people will pass on a video if they think it's cool – because it makes them look cool too. I have friends and colleagues who are cool, so I quizzed them for

Tip! You may find it useful to read the questions but not the options before you read the text – this may help you focus on the most appropriate bits of the text.

Tip! Don't expect to understand every word or phrase in the text. The general context may help you to understand roughly what unfamiliar words or expressions mean.

Tip! The answer must say the same as what is in the text – don't choose an option just because it states something true, if that truth is not in the text. And don't choose an option just because it uses some words from the text.

Advice

Title – what does the title tell you about the text?

15 'Such' means you have to look back for something previously mentioned in the text. Make sure what you find makes sense in the context of the 'such' sentence.

16 Donath is quoted twice. Which phrase in the text reflects the idea of 'further reason' in the question?

18 'Sneezer' is explained in the text (Paragraph 6). What does it mean? Which of the options helps the writer in this way?

19 Think about the overall meaning of the text before answering this question.

inspiration. Eventually, we hit upon a winning idea. I called it *Pets Teach Science*. The aim is to demonstrate tricky concepts ranging from quantum physics to chemical structure with the help of man's best friend and other furry companions.

The next question was what to film for the first episode. For what I had in mind, a degree of canine discipline was required, so I contacted a group of dog trainers. They agreed to help, and last month we made a film using 16 of their dogs to illustrate the structure of the atom. Some of the animals acted as the protons and neutrons in the nucleus, while the rest circulated to mimic the electron cloud.

A few days of shamelessly begging all my friends and family to disseminate the video resulted in fewer than 1,000 hits. The big breakthrough came after a tip from Michael Wesch, an anthropologist who studies the behaviour of visitors to YouTube. One of the key bits of advice he gave me was to send the video to a so-called "sneezer" – a media outlet or blogger that can quickly disseminate your video to a large number of people. "Almost every viral has a catalyst moment at which it has a big leap of, say, 100,000 viewers

at once," he says. For the massive videos, that sneeze can be anything from a TV appearance to a tweet by a popular Twitterer. This catapults the video onto YouTube's daily "most popular" lists, and the chain reaction begins. Even if only 1 in 10 people continue to share the video, you have succeeded.

It happened for me when I sent a link to the free London paper *Metro*. The paper gave *Pets Teach Science* an enthusiastic write-up, and the video's views surged by about 8,000 within a few hours. It soon appeared on YouTube's "pets and animals" page. In the following days, it was referred to in a couple of influential blogs and that almost doubled my hits overnight to more than 50,000. The growth continues, proving that with a little cunning, and some cute pets, anyone can make a video go viral. I can reveal that Charlie's record remains intact. Still, despite my worst fears, my video turned out to be a surprising success. Next up on the channel is a sleepy fat cat which will demonstrate Einstein's general theory of relativity with a trampoline. Keep watching!

- 13 The writer is on a ladder at the beginning of the article because
- A he is getting dogs ready for a video.
 - B someone is filming him with some animals.
 - C he is trying to make a special type of video.
 - D he is observing people making a film.
- 14 What does the writer's editor want him to do?
- A make them both famous
 - B investigate the success of the YouTube website
 - C get a film of some golden retrievers
 - D discover the reasons for the popularity of some videos
- 15 What does 'such grooming' in line 19 refer to?
- A using small talk
 - B sharing stuff on the web
 - C looking after each other like animals do
 - D establishing social networks through gossiping
- 16 Which of these does Donath give as a further reason why people share videos?
- A People enjoy entertaining their friends.
 - B People use videos as a statement of their ideas.
 - C People think it gives them a good image.
 - D People want to practise their technical skills.
- 17 What will the videos the writer is planning do?
- A show dogs doing amusing things
 - B present animals being trained in a scientific way
 - C use animals to illustrate scientific ideas
 - D demonstrate some simple experiments
- 18 Who or what acted as a 'sneezer' for the writer's video?
- A a local newspaper
 - B a popular online writer
 - C an anthropologist
 - D a specific website
- 19 In this article the writer's main aim is to
- A demonstrate that viral videos are relatively easy to produce.
 - B examine why viral videos are successful.
 - C show that viral videos can have an educational purpose.
 - D educate his readers in the tricks used by viral video makers.

Follow-up

Did you follow all the steps in the Action plan?